

Examiner informed the applicant that the proposed amendments faxed to the Examiner on October 8, 2002 had been entered. Marked up claims in the Appendix used the proposed amendments entered by the Examiner.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

The examiner rejected claims 1-2, 4, 6-9, 11-15, 17-18, 20-23, 25, 27, 29 and 31 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being clearly anticipated by Vuong et al., U.S Patent 5,762, 552. The applicant respectfully traverses these rejections. Next, the Vuong reference is described and contrasted with the present invention.

Vuong describes a gaming machine that generates an outcome to a game as a game server. If the game server is coupled by network 16 to additional gaming machines 14, the outcome is transmitted to these additional gaming machines. The results of various bets are determined by the network managers 40 or game machines 14 and winning wagers are paid while losing wagers are collected (Col. 6, 1. 9-28). The game server receives a connect/disconnect requests from the gaming machines, and when connected the game server sends video/audio signals and a stop bet command to a gaming machine showing the outcome of a game on the game server (see FIGs. 8A, 9 and 10, as one example, Col. 16, 1. 26-40).

Access to network 18 and connection of gaming machines to gaming tables 12 (which can act as a game server) is established through network manager 40 (Col. 6, 1. 38-41). Network manager 40 is responsible for controlling operation of network 16 and for providing system level resources to each of the gaming machines 14 connected to interactive network system 10. System level resources include the login and logout activity at each game machine 14, authorization to establish the stake, account balances, tracking the current availability of active game tables, status information regarding each particular game of chance such as minimum wager amounts, table limits or game statistics (for example, number of players, average time required to complete each play of the game, etc.), establishing the connection with off-site game machines (Col. 7. 1. 65-Col. 1. 27).

In contrast the present invention, as described in claims 1 and 17, provides a gaming machine with a) "a master gaming controller coupled to the housing designed or configured to control a game played on the gaming machine," b) "a game server for providing one or more game services to a plurality of gaming machines within a network of gaming machines" where "the gaming machine is capable of receiving game information from one or more gaming machines via the communication interface, controlling a game service of at least of a bonus

game, a progressive game and combinations thereof using the received game information and providing the bonus game, the progressive game and combinations thereof to the one or more gaming machines.” Vuong describes a game server sending stop bet commands and video/audio signals showing a game to a remote gaming machine. Vuong does not describe a gaming machine that controls a bonus game or a progressive game on connected gaming machines. In the action dated July 15, 2002, the examiner confirms this assertion and states:

Vuong discloses a method that has a game operation, but does not disclose the game operation being either presenting a bonus game or displaying a progressive jackpot.

Further, the game server in Vuong does not receive information from the gaming machines used for providing a bonus game or a progressive game or any motivation for receiving such information. Vuong only describes receiving stop bet and connect/disconnect information from the gaming machines. In Vuong, a network manager, separate from the gaming machines provides control of the network and system level resources for a group of gaming machines, such as login activity, accounting and game statistics. For at least these reasons, the Vuong reference can't be said to anticipate claims 1-2, 4, 6-9, 11-15, 17-18, 20-23 and 25, which depend from claims 1 and 17 and the rejection is believed overcome thereby.

In regards to claim 27, the present invention describes downloading coding instructions from a second gaming machine to a first gaming machine after a game selection has been made on the first gaming machine where “the coding instructions allow the master gaming controller on said first gaming machine to present the game selection to a player.” Vuong describes transmitting audio/video signals to a gaming machine from a game server. The video/audio signals show a game, such as a live table game, on the gaming machine. However, Vuong does not describe sending the “coding instructions”, i.e., the software used to generate the game to the gaming machine from the game server so that the game can be generated locally on the gaming machine. For at least these reasons, the Vuong reference can't be said to anticipate claim 27 and claim 28, which depends from claim 27, and the rejection is believed overcome thereby.

In regards to claim 29, the present invention describes, as recited in claim 29, “configuring a first gaming machine with at least one of hardware settings, software settings and combinations thereof configuring a first gaming machine with at least one of hardware settings, software settings and combinations thereof “ and “downloading the game configuration information to a second gaming machine from the game server on said first gaming machine wherein the second gaming machine is capable of configuring itself using

the downloaded game configuration information from the first gaming machine." Vuong describes transmitting audio/video signals and a stop bet command to a gaming machine from a game server. However, Vuong does not describe sending hardware settings or software settings from a first gaming machine to a second gaming machine that is used by the second gaming machine to configure itself. For at least these reasons, the Vuong reference can't be said to anticipate claim 29 and claims 30 and 31, which depend from claim 29, and the rejection is believed overcome thereby.

In regards to claim 6 of the present invention, the applicant asserts the limitation recited in claim 6, "a concentrator for gathering information from a plurality of gaming machine in the network of gaming machines" is a patentably distinct limitation not shown in Vuong. In Vuong, the network manager, separate from the gaming machines, receives information from a plurality of gaming machines and controls access to the network and routes communications between the gaming machines and the game servers. Thus, the concentrator functions in Vuong are located in the network manager and not the gaming machine with the game server.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) and § 103(a)

The examiner rejected claim 3, 5, 16, 19, 26, 28 and 30 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being as anticipated by or in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), as being obvious over Vuong, et al., U.S. Patent 5,762, 552. The rejection is respectfully traversed.

For at least the reasons described above, Vuong does not anticipate or render obvious, the independent claims that claims 3, 5, 16, 19, 26, 28 and 30 depend from and thus can't be said to render obvious or anticipate the dependent claims. In regards to claims 3 and 19, which recite that "the game service is progressive game play, bonus game play, accounting, game serving or game configuration," Vuong describes transmitting audio/video signals from a game server to a gaming machine to present a game on the gaming machine. However, Vuong, as noted by the examiner, does not describe progressive game play and bonus game play. Further, in regards to accounting, Vuong teaches away from the present invention because it describes that system level resources, such as accounting, are performed by the network manager, which is separate from the gaming machine. Vuong does not describe game configuration services as is described in the present invention. Thus, for at least these reasons, Vuong can't be said to anticipate or render obvious claim 3, 5, 16, 19, 26, 28 and 30 and the rejection is believed overcome thereby.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

The examiner rejected claims 10 and 24 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), as being unpatentable over Vuong, et al., U.S. Patent 5,762, 552 in View of Weiss (U.S. Patent no. 5, 611, 730). The rejection is respectfully traversed. First, Weiss is described and then Weiss, Vuong and the combination of Vuong and Weiss is compared and contrasted with the present invention.

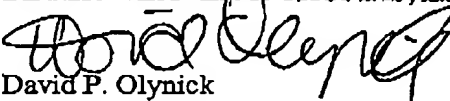
Weiss describes a progressive gaming system (See FIG. 1). In the progressive gaming system, a host site gathers information from a plurality of casinos regarding play on individual gaming machine (Col. 7, 1. 5-12). The host site receives information from a casino site master controller which is responsible for broadcasting progressive events to the progressive meters, communicating with the host site and receiving information from bank controllers (Col. 8, 1. 43-55). A bank controller is used to poll data from the individual gaming machines, store and validate the data (Col. 9, 12-25). In Weiss, the gaming machine provide data to the remote progressive system but do not communicate with other gaming machines. A removable memory is not described in the gaming machines in Weiss and a motivation or suggestion for a having a removable memory is not provided (Col. 9, 1. 65-Col. 10, 1. 63).

In contrast the present invention, as described in claims 1 and 17, provides a gaming machine with a) "a master gaming controller coupled to the housing designed or configured to control a game played on the gaming machine," b) "a game server for providing one or more game services to a plurality of gaming machines within a network of gaming machines" where "the gaming machine is capable of receiving game information from one or more gaming machines via the communication interface, controlling a game service of at least of a bonus game, a progressive game and combinations using the received game information and providing the bonus game, the progressive game and combinations thereof to the one or more gaming machines." In Weiss, the gaming machines do not receive game information from other gaming machines. The progressive game functions are provided by a number of devices located outside of the gaming machine including a host site, a casino site master controller and a bank controller. A gaming machine that is capable of receiving game information from one or more gaming machines and providing a bonus game or a progressive game to other gaming machines is not described in Weiss. Further, Weiss does not provide any motivation for providing a gaming machine with these functions. As described above, Vuong describes a game server that sends stop bet commands and video/audio signals showing a game to a remote gaming machine. Vuong does not describe a gaming machine that controls a bonus game or a progressive game on connected gaming machines. In regards, to claim 10, Weiss or Vuong does not describe a gaming machine with a removable memory. Thus, for at least these reasons, Vuong, Weiss or the combination Vuong and Weiss can't be said to render obvious claims 10 and 24, which respectively depend from claims 1 and 17, and the rejection is believed overcome thereby.

CONCLUSION

Applicant believes that all pending claims are allowable and respectfully requests a Notice of Allowance for this application from the Examiner. Should the Examiner believe that a telephone conference would expedite the prosecution of this application, the undersigned can be reached at the telephone number set out below.

Respectfully submitted,
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1. (Twice Amended) A gaming machine comprising:
 - a housing;
 - a master gaming controller coupled to the housing designed or configured to control[that controls] a game played on the gaming machine;
 - a display coupled to the housing for displaying the game controlled by the master gaming controller;
 - one or more input devices coupled to the housing for accepting indicia of credit wherein the indicia of credit are for making wagers on the game played on the gaming machine;
 - a game server [that provides]for providing one or more game services to a plurality of gaming machines within a network of gaming machines; and
 - a communication interface connected to the network of gaming machines [wherein the gaming machine is capable of receiving game information from the plurality of gaming machines via the communication interface and providing game services of at least one of a bonus game, a progressive game and combinations thereof to the plurality of gaming machines using the received game information]
 - wherein the gaming machine is capable of receiving game information from one or more gaming machines via the communication interface, controlling a game service of at least of a bonus game, a progressive game and combinations using the received game information and providing the bonus game, the progressive game and combinations thereof to the one or more gaming machines.
2. The gaming machine of claim 1, wherein the game played on the gaming machine is selected from the group consisting of slot games, video poker, video black jack, keno, and lottery.
3. The gaming machine of claim 1, wherein the game service is progressive game play, bonus game play, accounting, game serving or game configuration.
4. The gaming machine of claim 1, wherein the gaming machines in the network are connected in one or more loops.
5. The gaming machine of claim 1, wherein the plurality of gaming machines are connected using fiber optic connections, wire connections, or wireless connections.

6. The gaming machine of claim 1, further comprising a concentrator for gathering information from a plurality of gaming machine in the network of gaming machines.
7. The gaming machine of claim 1, further comprising a translator that translates one communication protocol to another communication protocol.
8. The gaming machine of claim 1, wherein the game server is a component in at least one of the plurality of gaming machines in the gaming machine network.
9. The gaming machine of claim 1, wherein the game server includes a microprocessor for performing game server functions.
10. The gaming machine of claim 1, further comprising a memory device storing game information wherein the memory device is removable from the gaming machine.
11. The gaming machine of claim 1, further comprising a memory device storing game information from a plurality of gaming machines
12. The gaming machine of claim 11, wherein the game information is a number of games played, a number of wins, a number of losses, a game event, and an amount of money wagered for one or more gaming machines.
13. The gaming machine of claim 11, wherein the game information is game coding instructions that allow a master gaming controller to present the game to a player on the gaming machine.
14. The gaming machine of claim 11, wherein the game information is game configuration information that configures a gaming machine for the game play of a particular game.
15. The gaming machine of claim 1, further comprising an input device and a display device wherein the input device and the display device enable a player to select the game

for game play from a list of games displayed on the display screen wherein the coding instructions for each game on the list of games are stored on the game server.

16. The gaming machine of claim 1, wherein the network is a progressive game network, a casino area network or a bonus game network.

17. (Twice Amended) A method for providing game services to a group of gaming machines connected in a network [using a gaming machine with having a master gaming controller and a game server], the method comprising:

in a first gaming machine that comprises i) a housing; ii) a master gaming controller coupled to the housing designed or configured to control a game played on the first gaming machine; iii) a display coupled to the housing for displaying the game controlled by the master gaming controller; iv) one or more input devices coupled to the housing for accepting indicia of credit wherein the indicia of credit are for making wagers on the game played on the first gaming machine; v) a game server for providing one or more game services to a plurality of gaming machines within the network of gaming machines; and vi) a communication interface connected to the network of gaming machines,

communicating with one or more gaming machines on the gaming machine network wherein each gaming machine presents a game to a player playing a game on the gaming machine;

determining that a gaming service is required for one or more gaming machines in the network;

receiving game information used to provide the gaming service from the one or more gaming machines;

executing a server operation using the received game information to generate the gaming service for one or more gaming machines in the network; and

providing the game service to the one or more gaming machines in the gaming machine network wherein the game service is at least one of a bonus game, a progressive game and combinations thereof.

18. The method of claim 17, wherein the game is selected from the group consisting of slot games, video poker, video black jack, keno, and lottery.

19. The method of claim 17, wherein the game service is progressive game play, bonus game play, accounting, game serving or game configuration.
20. The method of claim 17, further comprising:
sending a signal requesting game information to a plurality of gaming machines connected to the network;
receiving game information from one or more gaming machines connected to the network; and
storing the game information from the plurality of gaming machines on the game server;
21. (Amended) The method of claim 19, further comprising concentrating game information from a plurality of gaming machines [wherein the game information is concentrated using a concentrator a gaming machine with a game server] and sending the game information to at least one of a translator or [to] a game server.
22. (Amended) The method of claim 19, further comprising translating game information from a plurality of gaming machines from one communication protocol to another communication protocol [wherein the game information is translated using a translator within a gaming machine with a game server] and sending the game information to a game server.
23. (Amended) The method of claim 17, further comprising,
sending a signal instructing the master gaming controller on a plurality of gaming machines to perform a game operation for the game service.
24. The method of claim 23, wherein the game operation is presenting a bonus game or displaying a progressive jackpot.
25. The method of claim 20, wherein the game information is selected from the group consisting of a number of games played, a number of wins, a number of losses, a game event, and an amount of money wagered for one or more gaming machines.

26. The method of claim 17, wherein the network is a progressive game network, a bonus game network or a casino area network.
27. (Amended) A method for providing game serving to a group of gaming machines connected in a network [using a gaming machine having a master gaming controller and a game server], the method comprising,
- displaying a list of games on a first gaming machine;
 - receiving a game selection signal for a game selection on the first gaming machine;
 - transmitting the game selection signal to a second gaming machine wherein the second gaming machine comprises i) a housing; ii) a master gaming controller coupled to the housing designed or configured to control a game played on the gaming machine; iii) a display coupled to the housing for displaying the game controlled by the master gaming controller; iv) one or more input devices coupled to the housing for accepting indicia of credit wherein the indicia of credit are for making wagers on the game played on the second gaming machine; v) a game server for providing one or more game services to a plurality of gaming machines within the network of gaming machines; and vi) a communication interface connected to a network of gaming machines;; and
 - downloading coding instructions for the game selection to said first gaming machine from the game server on said second gaming machine wherein the coding instructions allow the master gaming controller on said first gaming machine to present the game selection to a player.
28. The gaming machine of claim 27, wherein the game selection is selected from the group consisting of video poker, video black jack, slot games, keno, video pachinko or lottery.
29. (Amended) A method for providing game configurations to a group of gaming machines connected in a network [using a gaming machine having a master gaming controller and a game server], the method comprising,
- configuring a first gaming machine [capable of presenting a game of chance] with at least one of hardware settings, software settings and combinations thereof wherein the first gaming machine comprises i) a housing; ii) a master gaming controller coupled to

the housing designed or configured to control a game played on the first gaming machine;
iii) a display coupled to the housing for displaying the game controlled by the master
gaming controller; iv) one or more input devices coupled to the housing for accepting
indicia of credit wherein the indicia of credit are for making wagers on the game played
on the first gaming machine; v) a game server for providing one or more game services
to a plurality of gaming machines within the network of gaming machines; and vi) a
communication interface connected to the network of gaming machines;

storing the game configuration information to the game server on said first gaming machine wherein the game configuration information comprises at least one of the hardware settings, the software settings and combinations thereof; and

downloading the game configuration information to a second gaming machine from the game server on said first gaming machine wherein the second gaming machine is capable of configuring itself using the downloaded game configuration information from the first gaming machine.

30. The gaming machine of claim 29, wherein the game is selected from the group consisting of video poker, video black jack, slot games, keno, video pachinko or lottery.

31. (Amended) The gaming machine of claim 29, further comprising downloading game configuration information for the game to a third gaming machine from the game server on said first gaming machine wherein the third gaming machine is capable of configuring itself using the downloaded game configuration information. [allows the master gaming controller on said third gaming machine to present the game on said first gaming machine;]